Chetco Bar Fire Salvage

Recreation & Visual Resources Report

Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

Gold Beach Ranger District

Prepared by:

/s/_____
Dave Sheehan
West Zone Recreation Program Manager
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Introduction

This report describes the affected environment in relation to the Chetco Bar Fire Salvage (project) area's existing recreation uses and opportunities and potential effects of project activities on recreation and visual resources. For a description of the project proposal, refer to Chapters 1 and 2 of the Chetco Bar Fire Salvage Environmental Assessment. Three alternatives within the project area, including a no-action alternative, are herein evaluated in order to determine whether or not, and to what extent, potential project activities may affect the quality of the human environment as pertains to recreation and visual resources. This report discloses possible direct, indirect and cumulative recreation and visual effects that would result from the evaluated action alternatives.

Relevant Laws, Regulations, and Policy

Regulatory Framework

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Forest Service Manual 2300 directs Forest Service (FS) personnel to use the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) to classify FS managed lands. The ROS provides a framework for stratifying and defining classes of outdoor recreation opportunity environments. It establishes six ROS classes, each defined by a characteristic setting and experience; Primitive, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, Semi-Primitive Motorized, Roaded Natural, Rural, and Urban. Four of these classes exist within the project area: Primitive, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, Semi-Primitive Motorized, and Roaded Natural.

Primitive (P)

The primitive setting is an essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Interaction between users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free of human-induced restrictions and controls. Motorized use is not permitted. Users have an extremely high likelihood of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans. The primitive experience offers independence, closeness to nature, tranquility and self-reliance through the application of woodsman and outdoor skills in an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk.

Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)

The SPNM setting is a predominately natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. Interaction between users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. Minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is not permitted. There is a high, but not extremely high probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans. This experience offers independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of woodsman and outdoor skills in an environment that offers challenge and risk.

Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)

The SPM setting is a predominately natural or natural-appearing environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. Minimum on-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Motorized use is permitted. There is a moderate probability of experiencing isolation from the sights and sounds of humans. This experience offers independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of woodsman skills in an

environment that offers challenge and risk. There are opportunities for a high degree of interaction with the natural environment and to use motorized equipment while in the area.

Roaded Natural (RN)

RN settings are predominately natural-appearing environments with moderate evidences of the sights and sounds of man, which usually harmonize with the natural environment. Interaction between users may be low to moderate, but with evidence of other users prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Conventional motorized use is provided for in the construction and design of facilities. There is equal likelihood of experiencing affiliation with other user groups as for isolation from sights and sounds of humans. There are opportunities to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment, but challenge and risk opportunities associated with more primitive types of recreation are not very important. Practice and testing of outdoor skills might be important, and opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized forms of recreation are possible. A wide range of management activities and uses may take precedence, potentially resulting in substantially altered settings over much of the area. (USDA Forest Service, 1986)

The Visual Management System and Visual Quality Objectives

Under the Visual Management System (VMS), forest Management Areas (MAs) are inventoried and assigned Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs). Five long-term VQOs; Preservation, Retention, Partial Retention, Modification, and Maximum Modification, describe the degree of acceptable landscape alteration as measured in terms of visual contrast with natural surroundings. Preservation, Retention, Partial Retention, and Modification are within the project area, but only two intersect the project footprint: Partial Retention, and Modification. The Retention VQO is included for analysis of potential effects to the Chetco Wild and Scenic River Corridor, which is within the project area and through which log haul would pass.

Retention: Allows management activities which are not visually evident to the casual forest visitor. Under retention, activities may only repeat form, line, color, and texture which are frequently found in the characteristic landscape. Changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., should not be evident. Retention should be met during or immediately after operations.

Partial Retention: Allows management activities which are evident, but remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Activities may repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the characteristic landscape but changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Partial retention should be met within 1 year of project completion.

Modification: Allows management activities which visually dominate the characteristic landscape, but vegetative and landform alteration must borrow from naturally established form, line, color, or texture such that its visual characteristics are those of natural occurrences in the surrounding area. In other words, they must be visually compatible (Agriculture Handbook 462).

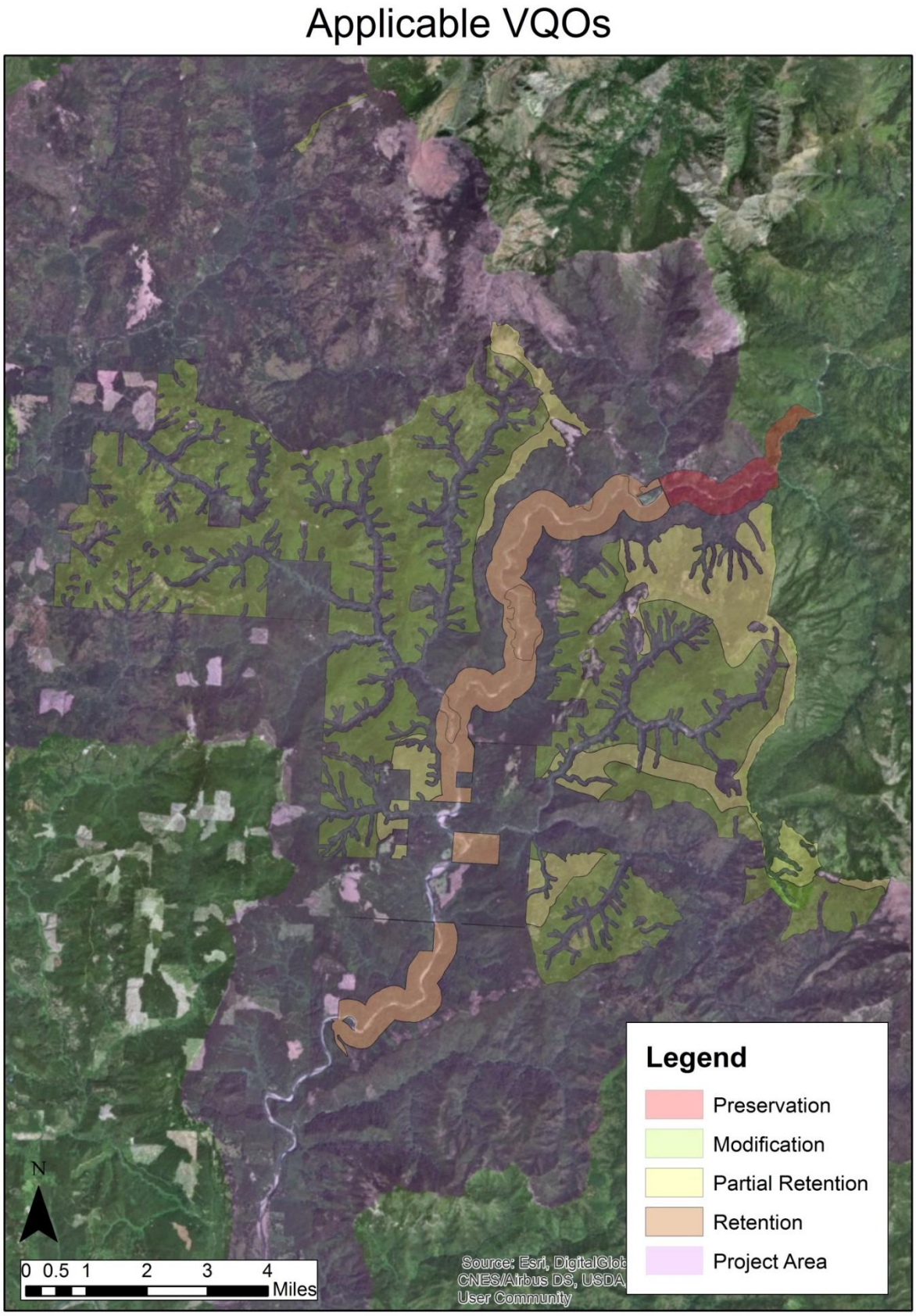

Figure 1: Applicable Project Area VQOs

Chetco Wild and Scenic River

The lower 19 miles of the Wild and Scenic Chetco River are within the project area. River segments are managed for ROS classes of RN for Scenic and Recreation Sections and Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized for the Wild portion.

River Segment	River Miles	ROS Class	VQO
Recreation	11.0 – 15.5 15.5 - 18.5 18.5 – 22.0	RN N/A, Private Land RN	Retention
Scenic	22.0 – 28.0	RN	Retention
Wild	28.0 – 30.0	Semi-primitive Non-motorized	Preservation

Table 1: Chetco WS River sections within the project area

The Chetco's character gradually changes as it flows through the project area from the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. The country becomes gradually less dissected, the river gradient lessens, the river bottom widens, and the surrounding hills become more densely forested. The river narrows in several areas, crossing through rock outcrops and leaving enormous boulders in the riverbed. The Chetco River Gorge, found just below Steel Bridge, contains steep sides, unusual rock formations, class IV/V rapids, and is the most well-known of these areas. Below the gorge, the Chetco continues to broaden and the gradient continues to lessen, with sand and gravel bars and river terraces becoming more common.

Recreation is one of the Chetco's three Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs). The river and its adjacent corridor offer diverse recreational opportunities. In winter, salmon and steelhead fishing and whitewater kayaking are the primary recreational uses. Kayakers prefer the upper, more challenging Wild and Scenic segments, while anglers typically remain in the lower Recreational segment. In summer, fishing, four-wheel driving, swimming, boating, camping, sightseeing, and picnicking are the major attractions. The area is important to local residents who escape the frequent wind, fog, and lower temperatures of the coast by recreating near the more protected river. Recreation opportunities available on and near the Chetco River, particularly the outstanding opportunity to catch large Chinook salmon and steelhead, attract visitors from outside the geographic region. Visitors travel long distances to use the river resources for this outstanding fishing value. The river also provides settings for competitive events such as fishing derbies.

The river corridor, extending one-quarter mile on both sides of the river, is managed for VQOs of Preservation in Wild sections, and Retention in Scenic and Recreation sections. There are eight critical viewpoints identified in the Chetco Wild and Scenic River Management Plan which will be used to analyze potential visual effects:

Interim Wild Section	Wild
River Access at Tolman	Scenic
Upper Portion	Scenic
1376 Road Overlook	Outside of corridor
Middle Portion	Scenic
Steel Bridge	Scenic/Recreation
Low Water Bridge	Recreation
Little Redwood CG	Recreation

Table 2: Chetco WS Critical Viewpoints

Effects Analysis Methodology

Geographic Analysis Areas

The project footprint, where ground disturbing activities would take place, is within portions of the Chetco and Pistol River 5th field watersheds and includes 4,090 acres of proposed salvage areas and their haul routes. All lands within the project footprint are National Forest System (NFS) lands. The project area, encompassing the 6th field sub-watersheds intersected by the project footprint, is approximately 143,047 acres as described in table 1 of the Chetco Bar Salvage EA. Recreation in the project area is focused by terrain and access into four areas: the Chetco Wild and Scenic River corridor, Snaketooth/Mt. Emily, Quail Prairie Mountain/Vulcan Peak, and Snow Camp/Mineral Hill.

Chetco Wild and Scenic River

The Chetco Wild and Scenic River corridor is the most heavily recreated portion of the project area. Primarily accessed by Forest Service Road (FSR) 1376 from the town of Brookings, it receives year-round use: from November through March, the section below South Fork receives high use from drift boat and bank anglers fishing for steelhead. Commercial and private drift-boaters regularly put-in and take-out at South Fork, Redwood, Miller and Nook Bars throughout the winter, while bank fishermen use the gravel bars and available roadside pullouts.

Although not heavily used, class IV/V whitewater opportunities are available during the winter and early spring months above South Fork. Whitewater kayakers typically put in at Tolman, float the Chetco Gorge, and take out at South Fork.

During the summer months, gravel bar camping is popular along the Chetco River from the Forest boundary to South Fork. Miller Bar, Nook Bar, Redwood Bar, Lower South Fork, and Upper South Fork are rarely unoccupied between May and October, and it is common for these gravel bars to be bumper-to-bumper with trailers, cars, and tents on summer weekends. Swimming is a popular late spring/summer pastime, and a popular kayaking/tubing day trip puts in at South Fork and takes out at Loeb State Park, off-Forest. Redwood Nature Trail, accessed from FSR 1376 at the Forest boundary, receives year-round day use due to its ease of access and proximity to Brookings. The entire corridor receives year-round scenic driving use.

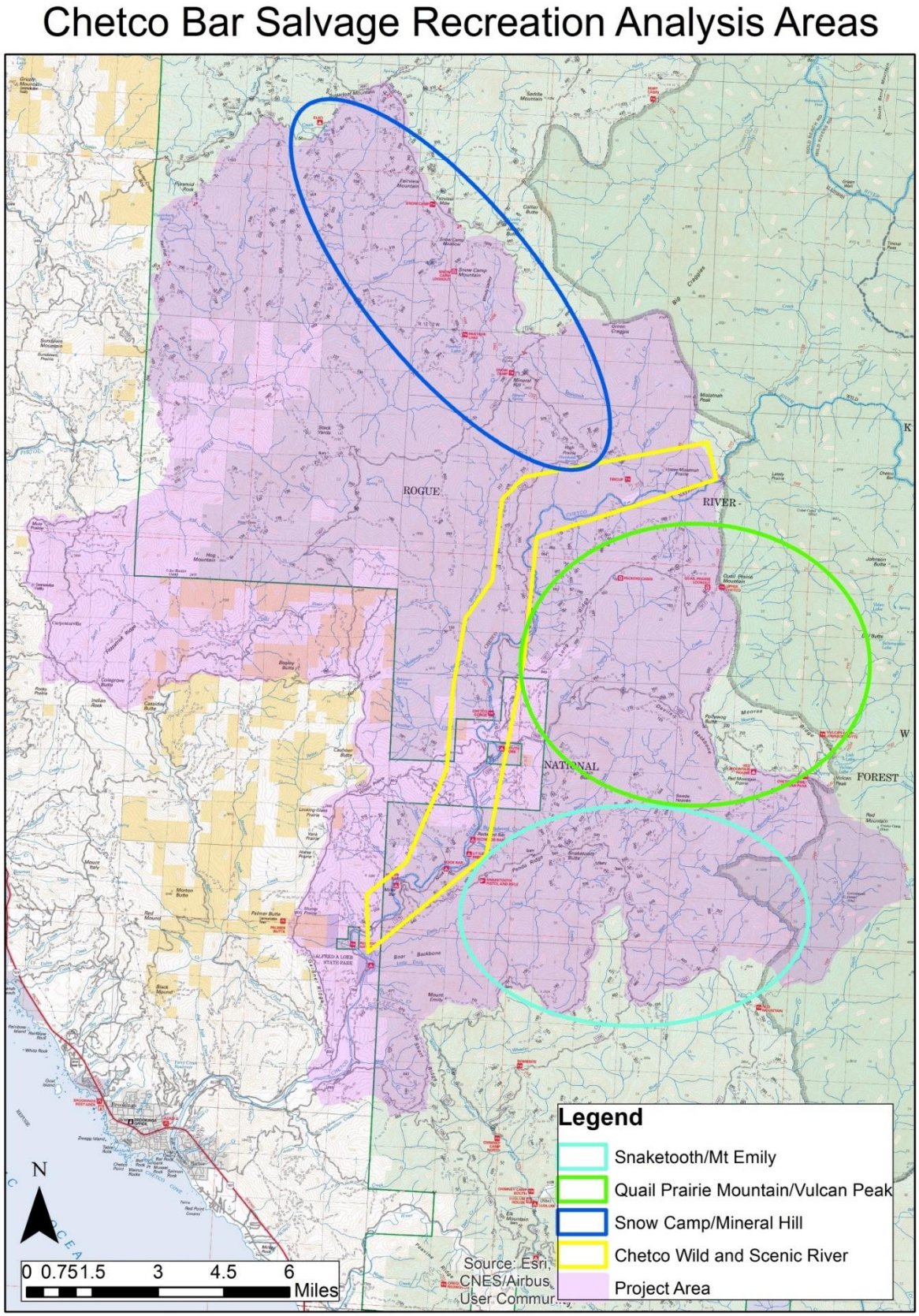

Figure 2: Recreation Analysis Areas

Snaketooth/Mt Emily

Bounded to the north by Panda Ridge and Snaketooth Butte, and to the south by Mt Emily, this area encompasses the Emily Creek watershed. It is primarily accessed via FSR 1107 from the Chetco River corridor, FSR 1983 from the south bank of the Chetco, and less frequently from the south via FSR 1107 from the Winchuck River corridor. Large portions remain below snow-line and are accessible from the Chetco and Winchuck corridors year-round. Recreation consists of target shooting at Snaketooth Rifle and Pistol Ranges, dispersed camping, scenic driving, and permitted firewood cutting. Recreationists also traverse this area to access the Kalmiopsis Wilderness at Red Mountain Trailhead, GBRD's southernmost wilderness entry portal.

Quail Prairie Mountain/Vulcan Peak

This area is bounded by Long Ridge to the north and by Devil's Backbone to the south, and accessed via FSRs 1917 and 1909 from the Chetco River corridor. The two roads describe a loop around the Quail Creek drainage from the Chetco River to the Kalmiopsis Wilderness boundary, accessing recreation opportunities at Packers Cabin Recreation Rental, Quail Prairie Lookout (closed), and Upper Chetco Trailhead. FSR 1909 continues east from the junction with FSR 1917 to access dispersed camping opportunities at Red Mountain Prairie and wilderness recreation opportunities at Chetco Divide/Vulcan Peak and Vulcan Lake/Johnson Butte trailheads. Recreation activities include scenic driving, dispersed camping, and wilderness access. Vulcan Lake, accessed through this area, is a popular summer day-hiking, camping, and swimming destination due to its proximity/accessibility and its unique, spectacular scenery. Red Mountain Prairie dispersed campsite, Chetco Divide/Vulcan Peak trailhead, and Vulcan Lake/Johnson Butte trailhead are close to each other and together represent the most readily accessible and heavily used west-side entry portal to the southern Kalmiopsis.

Snow Camp/Mineral Hill

The Snow Camp/Mineral Hill recreation corridor is accessed from the west via FSR 3680, and from the south via FSRs 1407 or 1376. Recreation opportunities, which generally parallel and are accessed from FSR 1376, include hiking on Snow Camp, Panther Lake, Windy Valley, and Tincup trails, renting Snow Camp Lookout Recreation Rental, and dispersed camping. Tincup Trail receives light day-hiking use to the Chetco River/Boulder Creek confluence, and light backpacking use as a Kalmiopsis Wilderness entry point in conjunction with Trans-Kalmiopsis backpacking routes.

Effects

Proposed project activities would potentially cause direct, indirect and cumulative effects to recreation and visual resources in all four recreation areas; to their primary ingress/egress routes, to developed and dispersed recreation sites, and to trails within or serving them. Direct effects would generally occur where project activities occur within visual and/or auditory range of rivers/streams, roads, trails, developed sites, and dispersed sites used by the recreating public. They would also occur any time project activities directly involve the management, improvement, or closure of such sites.

The VMS uses distance zones to describe a landscape from the viewer's perspective; foreground, middleground, and background. Foreground describes the distance at which details such as individual tree limbs can be discerned; it is usually limited to ¼ to ½ mile from the observer. Middleground describes the zone, ¼- ½ to 3-5 miles from the observer, where masses of trees are discerned as texture, but individual tree forms are seldom discernible except in very open/sparse stands. Background extends from 3-5 miles to infinity; texture is weak or non-existent in uniform tree cover, and is seen as groups or patterns of trees in very open/sparse stands.

Visual effects would depend on the distance of project activities from recreation sites and use corridors, and would vary based on site-specific terrain characteristics. In the steep and heavily forested wild and scenic river corridor for example, the visible landscape from the river, river-paralleling roads and trails, and river-adjacent recreation sites seldom extends past the foreground before sight is blocked by intervening terrain. In this situation, project activities conducted on the far side of the intervening terrain would not cause direct visual effects to recreation resources. In areas of subtler terrain or sparser vegetation, and where recreation facilities are situated in positions of vantage, the maximum ranges for potential direct visual effects could extend into middleground or background.

Short-term direct effects could include limited-duration facility, road, and trail closures, restricted access to areas near project activities, and the existence/increase of project-related traffic on FS roads in the project area. These effects would be limited to the duration of project activities, as would the sights and sounds of project activities within visual and auditory range of occupied roads, trails, rivers and recreation sites.

Short-term indirect effects would extend 3-5 years post project, and could include short-term shifts in recreation use patterns which might increase use-pressure on adjacent public and private recreation facilities/areas or place economic pressure on Chetco River commercial outfitters.

Cumulative Effects Boundaries

The spatial boundaries for analyzing the cumulative effects to recreation and visual resources are the boundaries of the Chetco Wild and Scenic River, Snaketooth/Mt Emily, Quail Prairie Mountain/Vulcan Peak, and Snow Camp/Mineral Hill recreation areas and their primary access routes; FSRs 1376, 1917, 1909, 1983, 1107, and 1407 because they contain the preponderance of recreation infrastructure and support most recreation activities in the project area.

The temporal boundaries for analyzing cumulative effects are from project completion to approximately one generation or 25 years post project, because that is the maximum amount of time necessary for the next generation of recreationists to grow up with the effects of proposed project activities; for departures from existing conditions to be regarded not as project effects, but rather as status quo.

Specific Methodology

Proposed actions under three alternatives, including a no-action alternative, are herein analyzed to determine their potential effects on desired ROS settings and experiences for affected MAs as described by the LRMP and applicable supplemental direction. Effects on visual quality are analyzed, particularly as supports desired ROS setting and experience, by determining the effects of proposed actions on VQOs for affected MAs as prescribed by the LRMP and applicable supplemental direction.

Data Sources

Field Observations

Field Notes

USFS GIS Data for RRSNF

Public Scoping Comments

National Forest Landscape Management Handbook Series, Volume 2 Chapters 2-8

Resource Indicators and Measures

Direct and Indirect Effects of Salvage Harvest

Indicator Measure 1: Landscape attainment of desired ROS experience/setting and recreation management objectives.

Indicator Measure 2: Landscape attainment of VQOs.

Short-term timeframe: 0-5 years post-project.

Long-term timeframe: 5-25 years post project.

Spatial Boundary: Location and activity-dependent; those areas of project activity accessible and/or visible as foreground, middleground, or background from roads, trails, wild and scenic river corridors, developed recreation sites, or known dispersed recreation sites.

Methodology: GIS spatial-data analysis, field observation, National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) reporting.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Road Actions

Indicator Measure 1: Landscape attainment of desired ROS experience/setting and recreation management objectives.

Indicator Measure 2: Landscape attainment of VQOs.

Short-term timeframe: 0-5 years post project

Long-term timeframe: 5-25 years post-project.

Spatial Boundary: Location and activity-dependent; those areas of project activity accessible and/or visible as foreground, middleground, or background from roads, trails, wild and scenic river corridors, developed recreation sites, or known dispersed recreation sites.

Methodology: GIS spatial-data analysis, field observation, NVUM.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Planting

Indicator Measure 1: Landscape attainment of desired ROS experience/setting and recreation management objectives.

Indicator Measure 2: Landscape attainment of VQOs.

Short-term timeframe: 0-5 years post project.

Long-term timeframe: 5-25 years post-project.

Spatial Boundary: Location dependent; those affected areas accessible and/or visible as foreground, middleground, or background from roads, trails, wild and scenic river corridors, developed recreation sites, or known dispersed recreation sites.

Methodology: GIS spatial-data analysis, field observation, NVUM.

Cumulative Effects Analysis

Long-term timeframe: 5-25 years post-project.

Spatial Boundary: Those areas of project activity accessible and/or visible as foreground, middleground, or background from roads, trails, wild and scenic river corridors, developed recreation sites, or known dispersed recreation sites, as well as primary ingress and egress routes for the project area.

Methodology: GIS spatial-data analysis, field observation, NVUM.

Environmental Consequences

This analysis of action alternatives assumes proper implementation of PDCs specifically developed to ensure project accordance with management guidance and to protect recreation, wilderness, wild and scenic river, visual, and associated values. Examples include, but are not limited to: minimizing stump heights; geographic limitations on type and extent of logging operations and associated practices; pile and landing size and location limitations; use of best management practices to minimize the visual disturbance of proposed actions; and temporal and spatial limitations to eliminate or minimize conflict between proposed actions and resource values. The full list of PDCs is available in the Chetco Bar Salvage EA and its appendices.

Alternative 1 – No Action

The existing condition ranges from areas of high fire intensity to areas of low-fire intensity in which groups of mixed vegetation and large Douglas fir survived. A no action alternative would allow the area to continue under natural processes, less-influenced by human activity. Periodic blowdown of trees would result from the influence of weather such as wind, and soil erosion resulting from heavy rainfall. No evidence of stumps and slash would be present. However, large numbers of blowdowns may create undesirable visual conditions, in addition to increased fuel loads which would place surviving trees at greater risk of fire in the future. Retention of non-historic stand structure may retard attainment of the desired condition. No salvage or other connected actions to capture timber value in the matrix land allocations would occur, nor would resultant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects. The economic value of the burned timber would not be recovered. The No Action alternative serves as a baseline against which effects of the action alternatives could be measured and compared.

Alternative 2– Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would provide an opportunity to capture timber value in the matrix land allocations by harvesting dead, dying and/or damaged trees resulting from the 2017 Chetco Bar fire. Doing so, however, would result in a less-desirable short-term scenic experience. Evidence of harvest activity would be obvious in the form of stumps and slash, even while still achieving VQOs. However, multiple prescription factors and design criteria would help to reduce the visibility and contrast of salvage operations. In addition to the retention of all live trees, the retention of all standing dead or dying trees below 7” diameter at breast height (DBH) would help to blend, or feather, the voids created by tree removal. In immediate foreground areas, limiting stump height to 8 inches, contouring stump cuts to terrain, facing cuts away from primary viewing directions, marking on sides away from public viewing

direction, and lopping/scattering slash to a depth of 12 inches would serve to reduce scenic effects. In all units, and particularly those in middleground and background views; mimicking the size and shape of natural openings, following contours, conforming edges to natural terrain features, avoiding straight lines and angular corners, and feathering the edges of created openings would lessen scenic effects by avoiding the introduction of artificial patterns, uniform appearance, and other contrasting visual elements.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Salvage Logging

There are 4,090 salvage acres in the Proposed Action. Of these, 1,656 acres are in areas with a partial retention VQO. The remaining 2,434 acres have a VQO of modification. No salvage activities are proposed in the Chetco Wild and Scenic River corridor or in any other areas with retention or preservation VQOs.

Proposed Action	Modification	Partial Retention	Total
Tractor	330	289	619
Skyline	1,353	1,025	2,378
Helicopter	750	343	1,093
Grand Total	2,433	1,657	4,090

Table 3: Acres by Logging System and VQO

Logging Systems:

Visual: Although there would be no visual effects within the Chetco WSR corridor, some units outside the corridor in partial retention and modification areas would be visible as middleground and background from the WSR. Project design criteria would ensure activities achieve VQOs without affecting the character and setting of the landscape as seen from the Chetco River. Salvage units would be visible in the immediate foreground and middleground from portions of primary travel routes (FSRs 1107, 1376, 1407, 1909, 1917), Forest Service Trail (FST) 1103, and Packers Cabin Recreation Rental. Visual effects would include machinery, personnel, piles, and exposed soil during active operations, and stumps and slash afterwards. These effects would gradually become less evident, but would likely be visible for 10-15 years or more depending on local understory regeneration. However, adherence to project design criteria (PDCs) would ensure that effects become subordinate to the natural landscape character within the prescribed timeframe to attain the applicable VQOs of partial retention and modification.

Recreation: The RN setting of this area would not be affected. Recreation opportunities would be limited in and immediately surrounding salvage units during project activities, but would remain available/unaffected in areas outside of the project footprint. Fire and project related changes in vegetation type may change how people use the area; in the short term, people may choose to recreate elsewhere, returning after 3-5 years when ground vegetation is reestablished. Hunting pressure may also increase about this time due to increased quantity/quality of deer habitat in the project footprint. People driving along primary routes through the project area would be subject to the sights and sounds of salvage activities, potential delays, and limited duration closures during operations. Project activities would negatively affect the ROS setting of Packers Cabin if it is occupied during active operations. Suspending operations in units adjacent to Packers Cabin for the summer recreation season would avoid this.

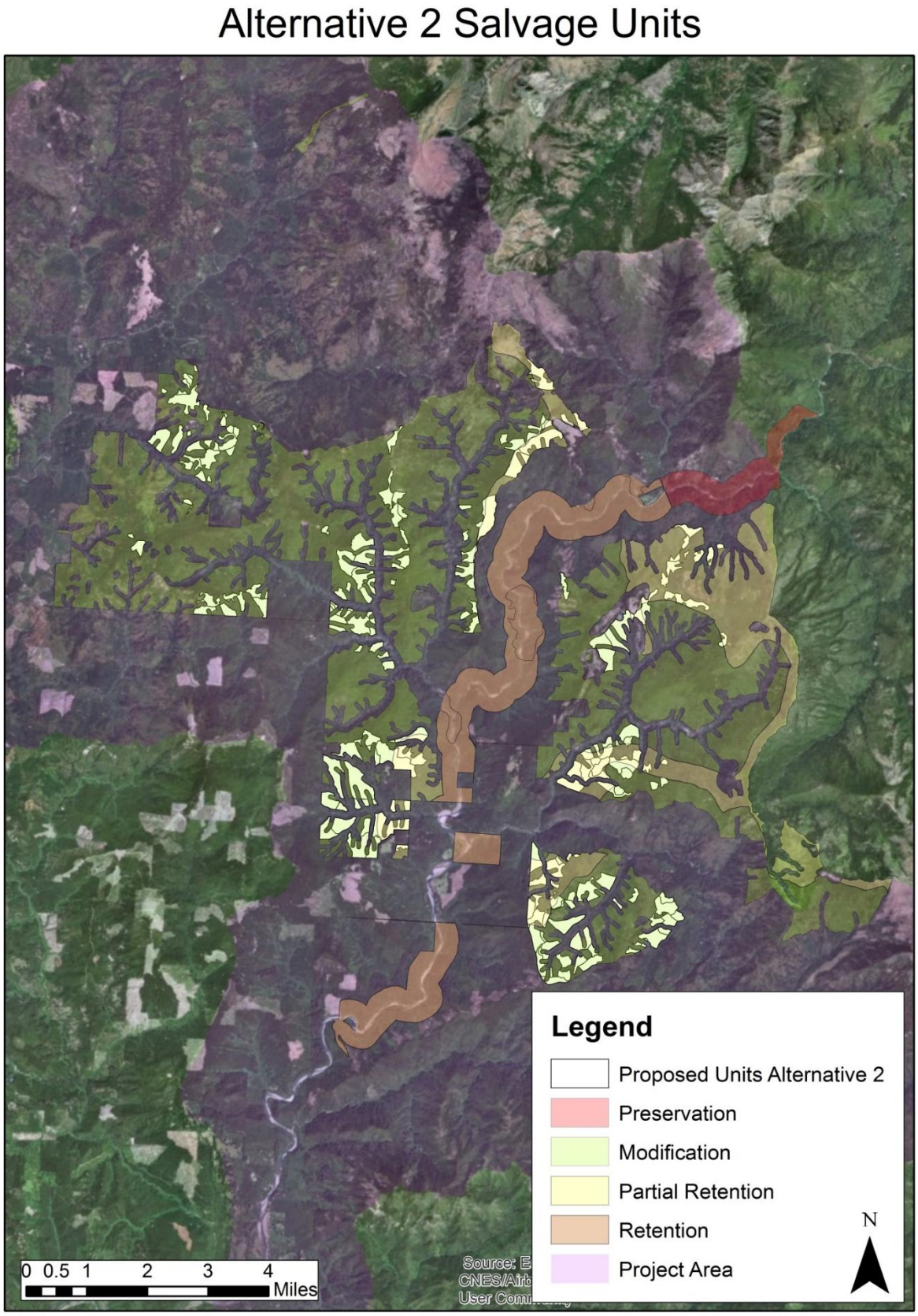

Figure 3: Proposed Action Salvage Units

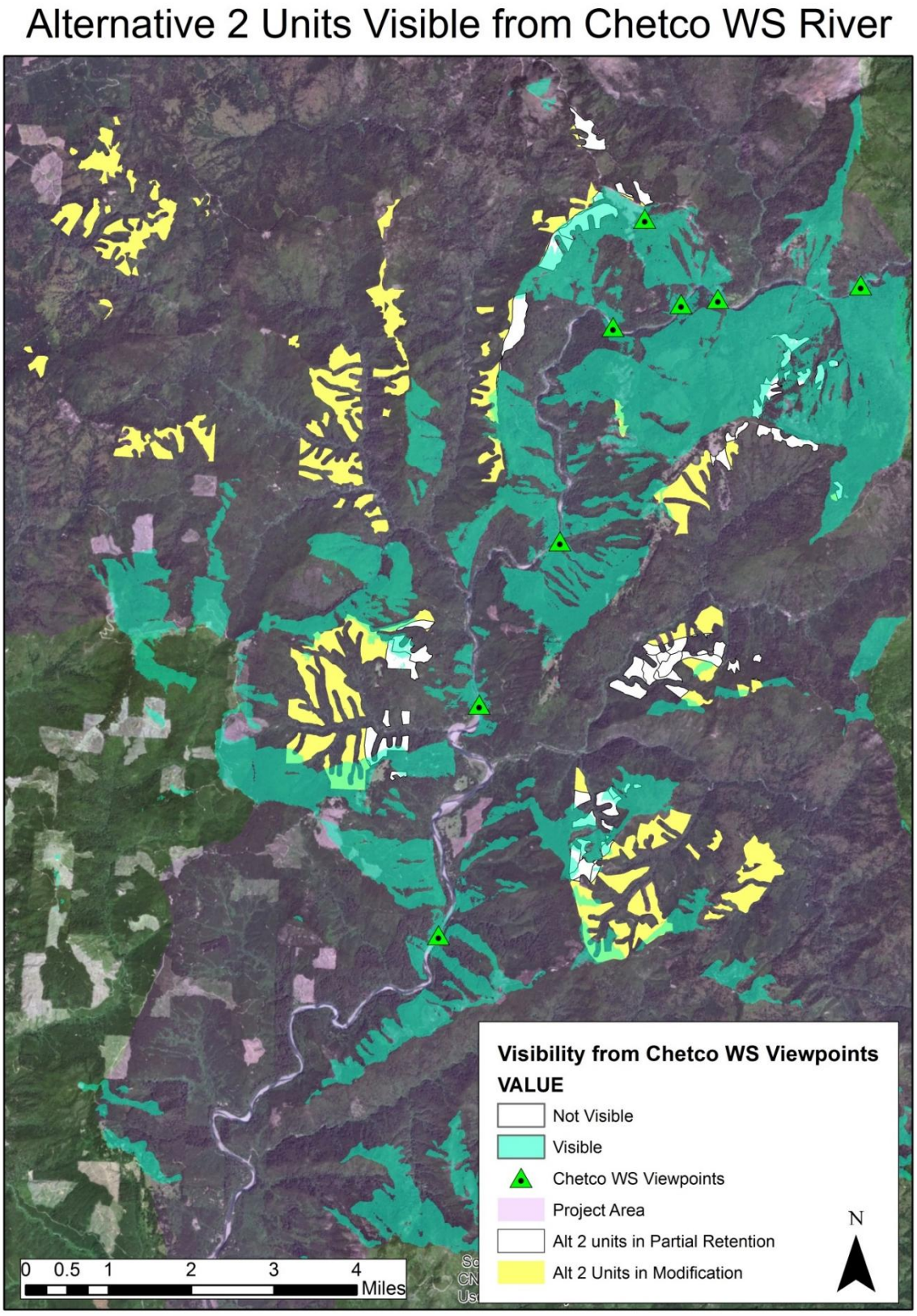

Figure 4: Proposed Action Salvage Units Visible from the Chetco WS River

Indirect: Most recreation traffic in the project area passes through the Chetco WSR corridor on FSR 1376. Shifts in recreation patterns due to project activities could increase pressure on FSR 1376, the Chetco WSR, and adjacent/nearby public and private facilities such as Loeb State Park, Social Security Bar, or the Chetco River Inn. Over the long term, use would likely revert to pre-fire patterns and levels subject to broader socio-economic trends.

Created Slash Treatments:

Visual: There would be no effects from created slash treatments in the Chetco WSR corridor. Landings, hand piling, and slash treatments would be visible in the foreground from FSRs 1107, 1376, 1407, 1909, 1917, and FST 1103, but adherence to PDCs would ensure that effects remain or become subordinate to the natural landscape character within the prescribed timeframe to attain the applicable VQOs of partial retention and modification.

Recreation: Landings and other created openings could create opportunities for new dispersed campsites or off-road opportunities, particularly if left unused during extended periods of time during project activities. Adherence to PDCs would prevent creation of new, unauthorized dispersed campsites and off-road opportunities post project. Project use of existing landings and openings would limit or prevent their recreational use. However, this effect would not extend past project completion.

Indirect: Creation of new dispersed camping and off-road opportunities and project use of existing openings could shift recreation patterns, locally affecting recreation pressure during project activities. PDC adherence would be effective to re-establish pre-project recreation patterns subject to socio-economic trends.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Road Activities

Road Maintenance

Visual: Roadside brushing, danger tree mitigation, and road widening would slightly open views into the surrounding landscape, but with adherence to PDCs would not affect attainment of project area VQOs. During maintenance activities, signage, personnel, and equipment would be visible in the immediate foreground of roads, but this effect would be limited to the road corridor and to individual project duration.

Recreation: Road maintenance and re-construction activities would not affect the area's RN setting. Road users would be subject to delays, time-limited closures, or detours, but public access would not be restricted, and inconveniences would be limited to the immediate vicinity and time period of actual work. Road maintenance and re-construction would provide an easier and more pleasant travel experience, and make travel on some roads possible for larger or lower-clearance vehicles.

Indirect: Maintenance and construction associated delays or closures could affect use patterns during maintenance activities, diverting recreation use to other roads or adjacent areas. However, such shifts would be ephemeral, limited to the immediate vicinity and duration of project activities. Improvement of roads could increase visitation in areas served by lower quality roads by easing difficulty of access and making it possible for larger and lower-clearance vehicles to access them. This would increase use pressure on those areas, but decrease use pressure in other areas by diffusing overall use over a larger area. By making previously inaccessible areas accessible to trailers, motor homes, and passenger cars, road maintenance could lead to increased dispersed camping/dispersed site use.

Temporary Roads

13.52 miles of temporary roads would be constructed, then closed and rehabilitated after use.

Visual: Temporary roads would be visible on the landscape, particularly in areas where grading, resurfacing, or other earthwork is required. However, because they would be closed and rehabilitated prior to project completion, there would be no effect on VQO attainment.

Recreation: Temporary roads would potentially receive unauthorized motorized use during the time they are open. Although unauthorized, this would result in increased motorized opportunities during project activities, and a perception of reduced opportunities when they are closed after project completion.

Indirect: Because temporary roads may be used by people during the time they are open, they and the areas they access may become known. This could lead to the creation of unauthorized routes to bypass rehabilitation measures and access those areas after the roads are rehabilitated. This would be prevented by adherence to PDCs and post-project monitoring.

Culvert Replacement

The Rainbow Creek culvert on FSR 1407-150 would be replaced.

Visual: Culvert replacement activities and freshly disturbed dirt would only be visible in the immediate foreground from the FSR 1407-150 and would not affect VQO attainment.

Recreation: Replacement of the Rainbow Creek culvert would not affect the RN setting. It would increase recreation opportunities and access in the Chetco WSR corridor by re-opening access to FST 1112 on the north/east side of the Chetco River. Currently, this trail is accessed by walking down FSR 1376-170 to the south/west bank, then fording the Chetco; there is no vehicular access to the trailhead. Replacement of the Rainbow Creek culvert would restore access to FST 1112 without fording the river, which would ease access and allow year-round accessibility.

Indirect: This action would affect use patterns in the Chetco WSR corridor. FST 1112 users would be more likely to access the trail from FSR 1407, which would lower recreation pressure on FSR 1376 and increase it on FSRs 1407 and 1407-150. Lack of adequate parking facilities along FSR 1407-150 could lead to resource damage if trail users attempt to park on the shoulders or roadside vegetation. During the winter months, when high water makes the Chetco unfordable, this would be the sole access to FST 1112. Were FSR 1407-150 to prove passable for trailered watercraft to the Chetco's north bank, its terminus would be a desirable put-in for drift-boaters during the winter steelhead season and for recreational floaters during the summer. This would divert considerable traffic from FSR 1376 from November through March, when drift-boat angling is the lower WSR corridor's highest use. Conversely, it would increase recreational traffic on FSRs 1407 and 1407-150. Additionally, increased traffic and boat put-in traffic at the terminus of FSR 1407-150 could result in resource damage without proper controls in place.

Log Haul on Roads

Approximately 103.7 miles of open roads would also be used for log haul. An additional 26.4 miles of alternate haul routes have been identified in the event of road failures.

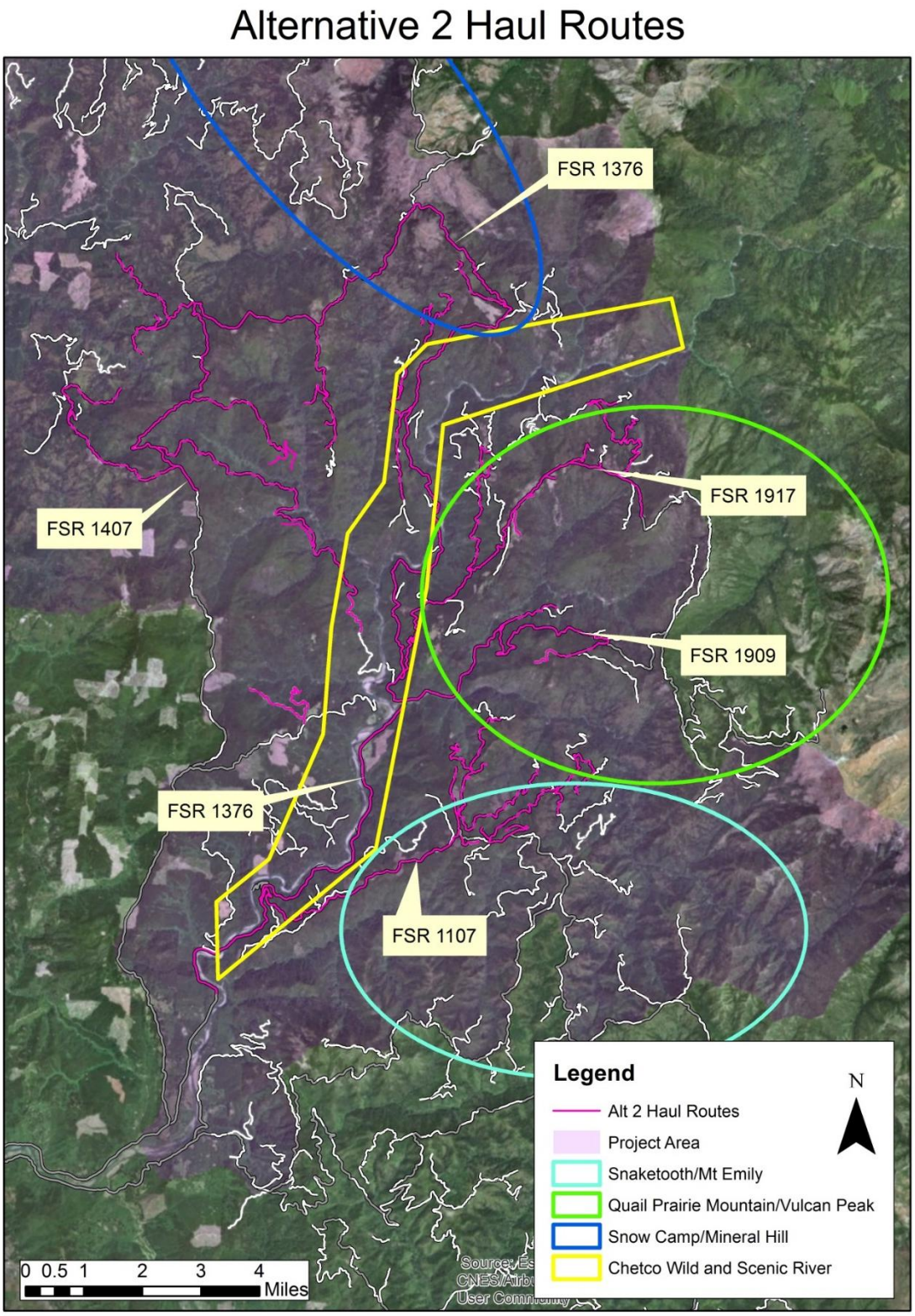

Figure 5: Proposed Action Haul Routes

Visual: During haul operations, log trucks would be visible driving back on forth on the haul roads and stopped at roadside pullouts. The visual effects would be ephemeral, lasting only during active hauling, and would not affect VQO attainment.

Recreation: The primary recreation access routes in the project area, FSRs 1107, 1376, 1407, 1909, and 1917 would also be primary haul routes. This would increase traffic on these roads, and put recreation traffic and haul traffic into direct contact. This would increase evidences of the sights and sounds of man, but not to the extent that it would compromise attainment of the RN setting, which allows for a wide range of management activities and uses to take precedence, potentially resulting in substantially altered settings over much of the area. FSR 1376 would see the greatest increase in traffic: the haul routes feed into FSR 1376 as tributaries feed into the main stem of a river, such that nearly all timber coming off of the project would eventually travel down it. Although FSR 1407 traffic would join FSR 1376 off-Forest, it would still interact with recreation traffic to and from the WSR corridor. The highest traffic times would coincide with steelhead season (November-March) and summer (Memorial Day-Labor Day). Existing road rules prohibit haul on weekends, and additional PDCs would prohibit haul on Memorial Day, the 3, 4, 5th of July, Labor Day, and Columbus Day to further minimize potential conflict between haul and recreation traffic.

Indirect Effects: The increased traffic could cause recreationists to avoid the project area, placing greater use pressure on nearby areas such as the Winchuck and Smith Rivers. It could also result in changed use patterns for the Kalmiopsis Wilderness, leading to increased recreation pressure on east-side entry portals, Red Mountain TH, Oak Flat/Illinois River National Recreation Trail (NRT), and Game Lake. This change in use patterns would likely end upon project completion, when traffic levels would return to normal. It is important to note that log haul from private timber holdings currently occurs on FSR 1376 under road-use permit. The times during the project when log haul would be occurring would not change from existing conditions; only the volume of traffic and size of the affected area during those times. Road use rules and PDCs would still ensure that recreationists could continue to safely enjoy recreation opportunities in and around the project area.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Planting

Visual: Site preparation and planting would be visible in the immediate foreground seen from roads, trails, and recreation sites, but would remain subordinate to the natural character and would not affect achievement of VQOs.

Recreation: Attainment of the RN setting would be unaffected; planting could hasten full visual absorption of project management activities by speeding-up the recovery of areas exhibiting inadequate natural regeneration.

Indirect: None expected.

Cumulative Effects

Visual: Roadside danger tree salvage operations would be conducted concurrently, or nearly concurrently, with project activities on ML 2 and higher roads in the project area. These activities would fell current danger trees and those that will become danger trees in the next five years, from road-edge to 1.5 times the average co-dominant tree height on both sides of the road. In steep terrain, this distance could extend out to 400 feet slope-distance to address hazardous rollout conditions. In combination with project activities and up to 9,455 acres of salvage on nearby private lands, this would result in a significantly more open landscape being visible from project area roads, trailheads, and recreation sites. However, the difference from existing conditions would be one of frequency rather than of type or scale.

Without human intervention, the dead and dying trees that would be removed by cumulative project activities would fall; just less predictably and over a longer time period. The cumulative scenic result of would be an acceleration of ongoing natural processes, arriving at an equivalent scenic balance and quality.

The resultant landscape would be one of open vistas over jumbled ridges cut by deeply incised river and stream corridors. Areas of sparse vegetation with standing snags and downed woody debris would be interspersed with irregular groupings of green trees. Riparian areas and protected drainages would be irregular swatches of green aligned with the natural contours, their lushness gradually feathering away into the sparser surroundings. The natural, irregular mosaic of the fire would guide project activities and therefore the scenic results; results which would repeat form, line, color, and texture common to the characteristic landscape, with changes in size, amount, intensity, direction, and pattern, remaining visually subordinate (partial retention). The cumulative visual effects would therefore meet or exceed VQOs for the project area.

Recreation: Danger tree and area salvage would combine to raise the visibility of salvage activities to the recreating public. Where the two would use the same roads or occur in close proximity to each other, people would experience more inconveniences and more sights and sounds of salvage activity. Additionally, danger tree salvage would require longer and more frequent traffic halts for public safety. Haul for danger tree salvage would use the same haul routes as area salvage, further increasing traffic on major area roads, especially FSR 1376. However, adherence to PDCs would still allow both projects to occur without compromising the RN setting and experience.

The images on the following pages are examples of visual simulations of the Proposed Action. A view looking south from Packers Cabin recreation rental was chosen to illustrate the possible effects of project activities. This view was chosen because of its importance as a view from a high use recreation site, and also because it offers the opportunity to simulate project activities as seen at foreground, middleground, and background distances. The images are intended to simulate the expected appearance the area might have after harvest activity. They should not be viewed as actuality, nor should it be assumed that any one image represents the exact activity to occur.

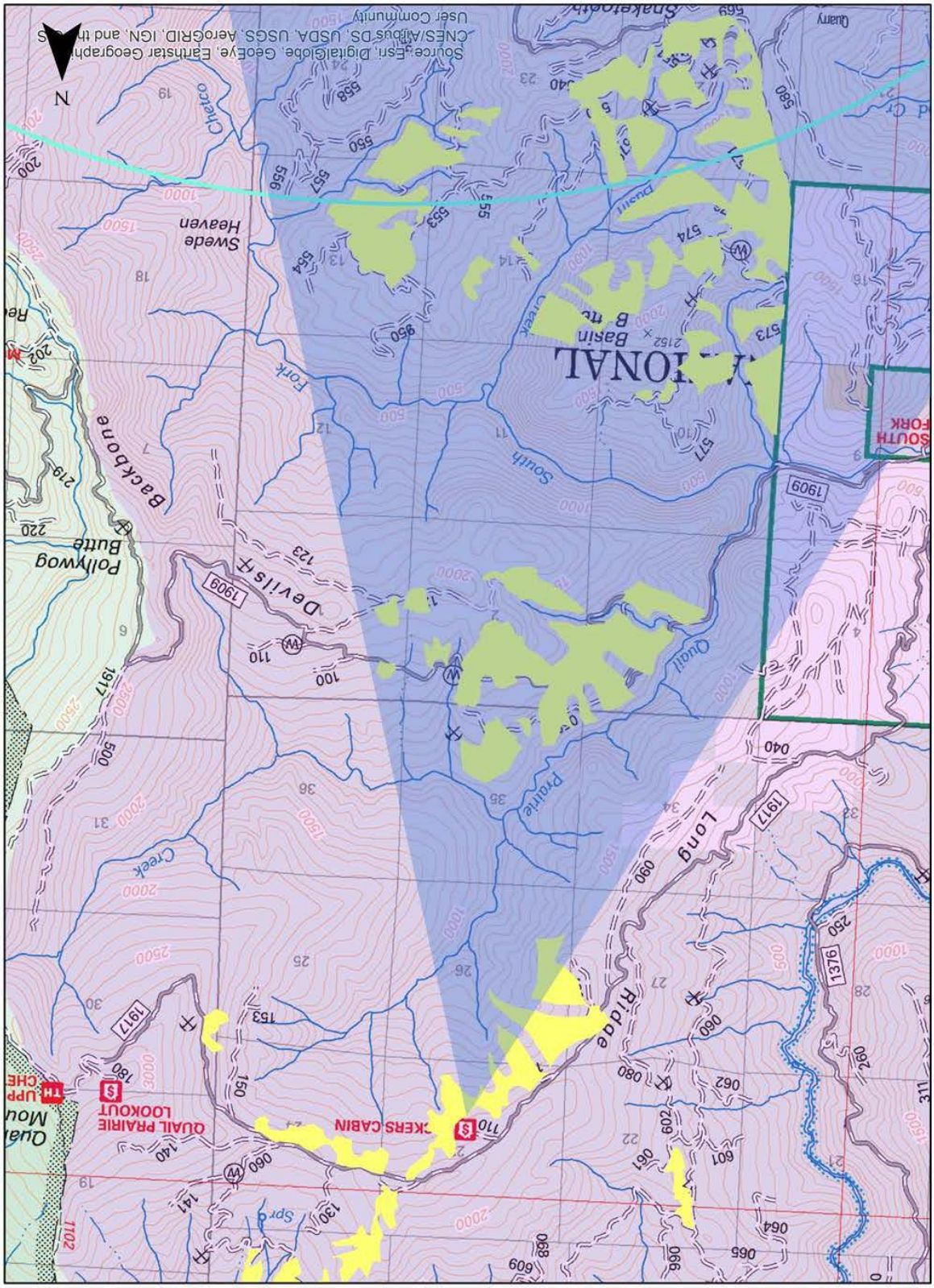

Figure 6: Simulation Viewshed from Packers Cabin

Figure 7: Existing Conditions with Visible Salvage Units Overlay

Figure 8: Simulation of Proposed Action Visual Effects

Alternative 3

There would be 2,222 fewer total salvage acres, 893 fewer Partial Retention VQO acres, and 1,329 fewer Modification VQO acres in Alternative 3. No salvage activities are proposed in the Chetco Wild and Scenic River corridor or in any other areas with retention or preservation VQOs.

Alt 3	Modification	Partial Retention	Total
Tractor	110	226	336
Skyline	785	459	1,244
Helicopter	209	79	288
Grand Total	1,104	764	1,868

Table 4: Acres by Logging System and VQO

Alt 3	Modification	Partial Retention	Total
Tractor	-220	-63	-283
Skyline	-568	-566	-1,134
Helicopter	-541	-264	-805
Grand Total	-1,329	-893	-2,222

Table 5: Difference in Acres from Proposed Action

Figure 9: Alternative 3 Salvage Units

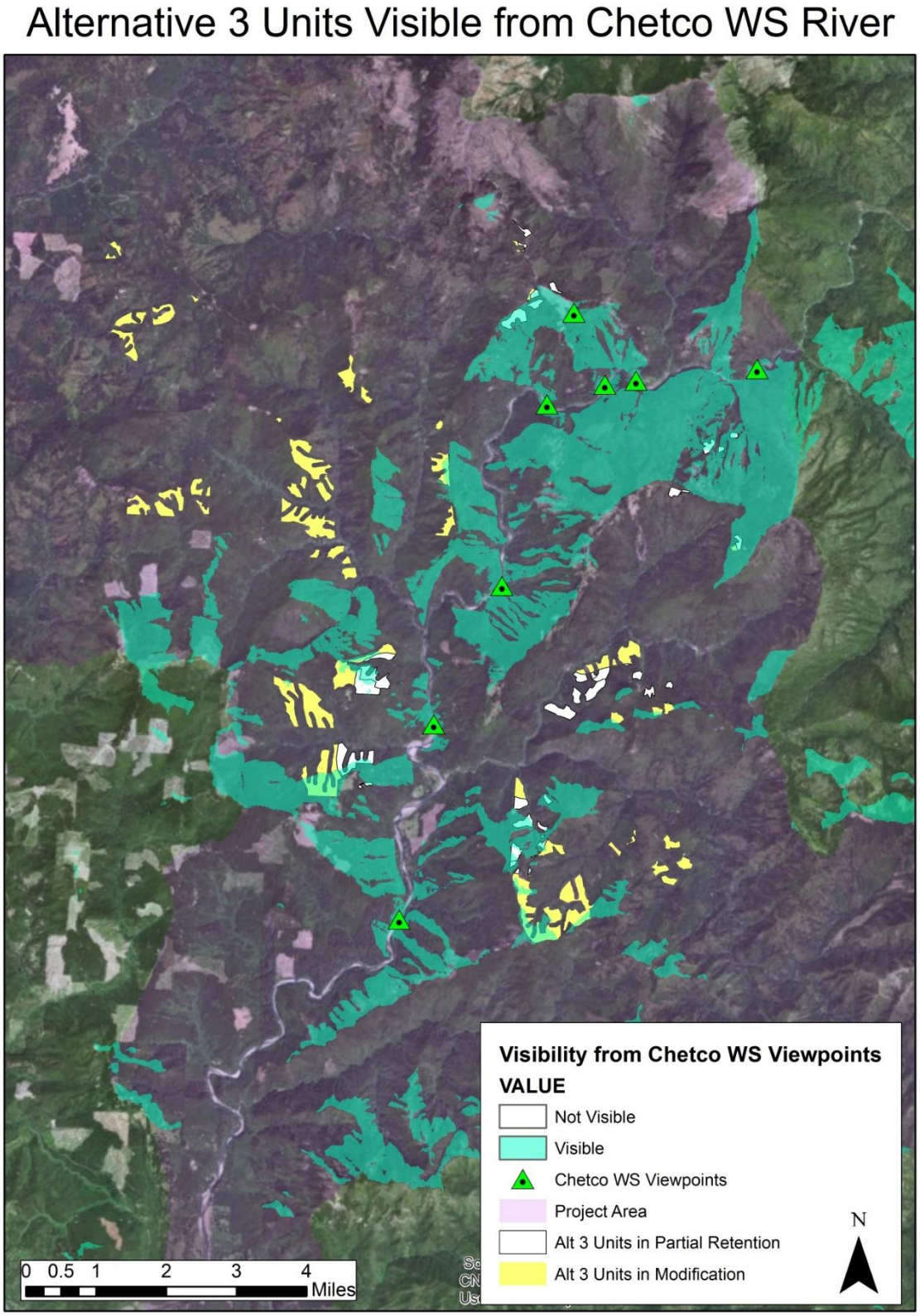

Figure 10: Chetco WSR Critical Viewshed

Direct and Indirect Effects of Salvage Harvest

Logging Systems

Visual: Direct effects would be the same in type but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action, except for the following differences: Fewer units would be visible from the Chetco WSR corridor. No units would be visible in the immediate foreground, and fewer units would be visible in the middleground from Packers Cabin Recreation Rental. Fewer units would be visible in the immediate foreground and middleground from portions of primary travel routes (FSRs 1107, 1376, 1407, 1909, 1917), and Forest Service Trail (FST) 1103.

Recreation: Direct effects would be the same in type but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action, except for the following differences: project activities would not affect the ROS setting of Packers Cabin.

Indirect: Indirect effects would be the same in type, but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action.

Created Slash Treatments

Alternative 3 requires eighty-two fewer landings than the Proposed Action. Direct and indirect effects would be the same in type, but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Road Activities

Maintenance Activities

There would be no change in activities from the Proposed Action. Direct and indirect effects would be the same in type, but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action.

Temporary Roads

About 9.36 miles of temporary roads would be constructed and rehabilitated after use, 4.16 fewer miles than in the preferred alternative. Direct and indirect effects would be the same in type, but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action.

Log Haul on Roads

Approximately 5.8 miles of closed roads, 0.5 miles fewer than in the Proposed Action, would be opened for log haul and re-closed at completion of the project. Approximately 88.6 miles of open roads, 15.1 miles fewer than in the Proposed Action, would be used for log haul. There would be no change in alternate haul route mileage from the Proposed Action. Direct and indirect effects would be the same in type, but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action.

Direct and Indirect Effects of Planting

Planting actions would be the same as in the Proposed Action, but on 2,222 fewer acres. Direct and indirect effects would be the same in type, but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects would be the same in type, but smaller in scale than in the Proposed Action.

Summary

In the aftermath of Chetco Bar Fire, in order to "provide a balance of resource management that will maintain a healthy Forest ecosystem, and help to supply local, regional and National social economic needs" (LRMP ROD page 10), and in order “to obtain a full yield of timber within the capability of the land” (Forest Plan IV-139), there is a need for timely salvage harvest in order to capture merchantable timber values in matrix land allocations that experienced 50-100 percent basal loss.

The No Action Alternative would cause no effects to visual or recreation resources, and the area would continue under natural processes, less-influenced by human activity. No salvage would occur, and no timber value would be captured; therefore the Purpose and Need for Action would not be met.

The proposed action would capture timber value from 4,090 acres of Matrix lands with VQOs of Partial Retention and Modification. Scenic effects would be visible from a multitude of vantage points across the project area, but would meet VQOs for all affected areas. Recreation effects would largely be limited to the duration of project activities. Recreation access and experience would be affected across the project area, primarily through increased traffic and sights/sounds of activities, but not to the extent that maintenance of the RN setting and experience would be jeopardized. The proposed action meets the Purpose and Need for Action, to the extent possible in accordance with applicable laws and management direction, without significant impact to visual or recreation resources.

Alternative 3 would capture timber value from 1,868 acres of Matrix lands with VQOs of Partial Retention and Modification. Scenic effects would be the same in type as for the Proposed Action, but smaller in scale, and therefore less evident overall. Effects would still be evident from multiple vantage points, but would still meet applicable VQOs. Recreation effects would likewise be nearly identical in type and duration as those of the Proposed Action but smaller in scale. The RN setting would not be compromised. Alternative 3 meets the Purpose and Need for Action without significant impact to visual or recreation resources, but to a lesser extent than the proposed action.

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